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CHAIR
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July 9, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

Working families and economically disadvantaged households in Washington Heights and throughout New York depend upon low-priced telephone services. I understand that the FCC is deciding whether to add new access fees on certain prepaid calling card services. I urge you not to increase the cost of these services, as doing so would surely raise the price of staying in touch for hard-working consumers.

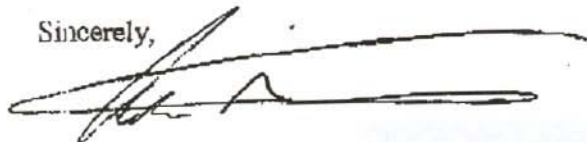
In the last several years, the Puerto Rican and Latino communities in New York have been the beneficiary of lower prices and new services from prepaid calling cards. These cards allow disadvantaged individuals to stay "connected" in their communities, whether it be to call their families, look for jobs, or schedule doctors appointments. Over one-half of households earning less than \$20,000 per year use calling cards on a monthly basis, as do 70% of African-American and 43% of Latino households.

Prepaid cards are particularly important to new Americans and the immigrant community. Without any credit history, such individuals may have no choice for telephone services outside of these prepaid calling cards. Quite simply, imposing access charges and fees on prepaid calls would take money from the people who use them and transfer it to large, Fortune 50 local telephone companies, who would be the largest recipients of additional charges and fees.

I have been working hard to bring economic development for women and minority-owned businesses in Washington Heights and all of New York, and telecommunications tools like prepaid calling card services play an important role in the success of these efforts. Minority-owned small businesses can use pre-paid calling cards to control their telephone costs during the crucial start-up phase of their businesses.

I strongly urge you to refrain from imposing additional access charges and fees on prepaid calling cards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adriano', followed by a long horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature area.

Adriano Espaillat

Member of Assembly

Chair, Black and Puerto Rican and Hispanic Legislative Caucus

Chair, New York State Task Force on New Americans

72nd District

cc: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Hillary Clinton